

6. THE CLAIMS

It is claimed:

1 1. A method of testing the hearing of a user utilizing a computer system, the computer
2 system including a computer and a speaker, the computer operable to generate an
3 electrical signal and then to output the electrical signal to the speaker, the speaker
4 operable to convert the electrical signal into a stimulus, the method comprising:

- 5 a) downloading a computer program from a server to the computer;
6 b) executing the computer program on the computer;
7 c) generating a stimulus, the stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-
8 stimulus, the first sub-stimulus being within the audible range of humans, the second
9 sub-stimulus being outside of the audible range of humans; and
10 d) receiving an input from the user that indicates that the user heard the stimulus.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of downloading the computer program
2 includes transferring the computer program from the server to the computer via the
3 Internet.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of downloading the computer program
2 includes transferring the computer program from the server to the computer via an email.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus from an audio stream that utilizes a larger number of bits to represent the
3 stimulus than would be utilized to represent the first sub-stimulus.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, the first sub-stimulus
3 having an amplitude that is smaller than the amplitude of the second sub-stimulus.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the first sub-
3 stimulus includes a Warble tone.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes a dithering signal.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes white noise.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating a
2 stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes pink noise.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further including:

- 2 e) sending first data to the server;
- 3 f) qualifying the hearing of the user; and
- 4 g) sending second data to the computer.

1 11. A method of testing the hearing of a user utilizing a computer system, the computer
2 system including a computer and a speaker, the computer operable to output an electrical
3 signal to the speaker, the speaker operable to convert the electrical signal into a stimulus,
4 the method comprising:

- 5 a) downloading a computer program from a server to the computer;
- 6 b) executing the computer program on the computer;
- 7 c) generating a stimulus, the stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-
8 stimulus, the first sub-stimulus being within the audible range of humans, the second
9 sub-stimulus being outside of the frequency range of the hearing test; and
- 10 d) receiving an input from the user that indicates that the user heard the stimulus.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of downloading the computer program
2 includes transferring the computer program from the server to the computer via the
3 Internet.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of downloading the computer program
2 includes transferring the computer program from the server to the computer via an email.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus from an audio stream that utilizes a larger number of bits to represent the
3 stimulus than would be utilized to represent the first sub-stimulus.

1 15. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, the first sub-stimulus
3 having an amplitude that is smaller than the amplitude of the second sub-stimulus.

1 16. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the first sub-
3 stimulus includes a Warble tone.

1 17. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes a dithering signal.

1 18. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes white noise.

1 19. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of generating a stimulus includes generating
2 a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, wherein the second sub-
3 stimulus includes pink noise.

1 20. The method of claim 11, further including:

2 e) sending first data to the server;

3 f) qualifying the hearing of the user; and

4 g) sending second data to the computer.

1 21. A program storage device that contains computer readable instructions that, when
2 executed by a computer system having a volume control, tests the hearing of a user by:
3 a) setting the volume control of the computer;
4 b) generating a stimulus, the stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-
5 stimulus, the first sub-stimulus being within the audible range of humans, the second
6 sub-stimulus being outside of the audible range of humans; and
7 c) receiving an input from the user that indicates that the user heard the stimulus.

1 22. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, the
3 first sub-stimulus having an amplitude that is smaller than the amplitude of the second
4 sub-stimulus.

1 23. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the first sub-stimulus includes a Warble tone.

1 24. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes a dithering signal.

1 25. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes white noise.

1 26. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes pink noise.

1 27. A program storage device that contains computer readable instructions that, when
2 executed by a computer system having a volume control, tests the hearing of a user by:

- 3 a) setting the volume control of the computer;
- 4 b) generating a stimulus, the stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-
- 5 stimulus, the first sub-stimulus being within the audible range of humans, the second
- 6 sub-stimulus being outside of the range of the hearing test; and
- 7 c) receiving an input from the user that indicates that the user heard the stimulus.

1 28. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus from an audio stream that utilizes a larger number of bits
3 to represent the stimulus than would be utilized to represent the first sub-stimulus.

1 29. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus, the
3 first sub-stimulus having an amplitude that is smaller than the amplitude of the second
4 sub-stimulus.

1 30. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the first sub-stimulus includes a Warble tone.

1 31. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes a dithered signal.

1 32. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes white noise.

1 33. The program storage device of claim 27, wherein the act of generating a stimulus
2 includes generating a stimulus having a first sub-stimulus and a second sub-stimulus,
3 wherein the second sub-stimulus includes pink noise.